

Parliamentary Petition:

Create an Emergency Carers Support Fund to increase care worker wages

REBUTTAL TO GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

[The Government issued its response to the Parliamentary petition](#) initiated by care worker Sian Stockham on 25th January. Sian's petition says:

The Government should support the 1.6 million care workers who, like me, are caring for our most vulnerable during COVID-19, by immediately creating a £3.9billion Emergency Carers Support Fund so we all receive at least the Living Wage Foundation's recommended hourly rate of £9.50 (£10.85 London). Up to three quarters of care workers earn less than the Real Living Wage, a quarter are on zero-hours contracts and tens of thousands are still not paid for all the hours they work. Along with the cross party, cross sector Future Social Care Coalition I believe it is time for a fair deal for social care workers. This is the first time that employers, unions and charities as well as those using care services have come together along with five former Health Ministers to speak with one voice.

The Government's response and the FSCC's line by line rebuttal is below. Interestingly, the Petitions Committee (the group of MPs who oversee the petitions system) agree with FSCC that the Government's response is inadequate writing to Sian on the 3rd of February to say they "Committee have considered the Government's response to this petition. They felt that **the response did not directly address the request of the petition and have therefore written back to the Government to ask them to provide a revised response.**"

The Government says:

"We are immensely proud of all that our care workers do and recognise their commitment. Since the introduction of the National Living Wage, care worker pay has risen at a faster rate than before."

The FSCC says:

Whilst recognition is welcome, the point to note is that the Government's National Living Wage - £8.72 currently and increasing to £8.91 from April 1st – is still well below the REAL living wage as proposed by the Living Wage Foundation which from April is £9.50 (and £10.85 in London).

The Government says:

"The Government recognises that the social care workforce has more than ever demonstrated unwavering compassion and dedication throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. We are proud of and immensely grateful to them for their ongoing work. We want to celebrate their work and give them the acknowledgement and appreciation that they deserve."

The FSCC says:

*We welcome the acknowledgement and appreciation given but the facts remain that up to **three quarters of the 1.6million social care workers earn less than the Real Living Wage** as recommended by the [Living Wage Foundation](#) and a quarter are on zero-hours contracts according to [Skills for Care](#).*

The Government says:

"The vast majority of care workers are employed by private sector providers who ultimately set their pay, independent of central government. Local authorities, as commissioners of adult social care, were given market shaping duties by the Care Act 2014 and must work with care providers to determine a fair rate of pay based on their local market."

The FSCC says:

*The Government should accept its responsibilities. It is interesting to note how care workers are "**our care staff**" when they're proud and grateful, but the private sector's problem when talking about pay.*

The Government says:

“Whilst the Government does not set levels of pay for care workers, we are committed to putting the social care sector on a sustainable footing, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. All social care workers are entitled to be paid at least the national minimum wage or national living wage for the work that they do. Since the introduction of the National Living Wage in 2016, care worker pay has increased at a faster rate than before. All time spent caring for clients, travelling between appointments, and waiting to start the appointment must be included in the pay calculation. (Further guidance on what counts as working time is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/minimum-wage-different-types-work>.) Further, we have given councils access to an additional £1 billion of funding for adult social care. This funding is designed to ensure key pressures in the system are met, including National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage. An increase in the rate of the National Living Wage means many of the lowest paid care workers will benefit from at least a 2.2% pay rise next year.”

The FSCC says:

*Once again the Government are not accepting responsibility. At the end of the day the Government decides funding levels for the care sector. If there isn't extra money there isn't decent extra pay. It's deeply cynical and insulting to care workers' and everyone else's intelligence to deny this. As the [Health and Social Care Select Committee](#) concluded late last year, **fixing social care costs** money, at least **£3.9 billion a year**.*

The Government says:

“Through the pandemic we have also taken steps to support care workers financially during the pandemic. We have now ring-fenced over £1.1 billion through our Infection Control Fund to support adult social care providers. The Infection Control Fund is to be used on measures such as helping maintain the normal wages of staff who may need to self-isolate. This is in addition to £4.6 billion we have now made available to local authorities so they can address pressures on local services caused by the pandemic.”

The FSCC says:

*The reality is that care workers and social care has been on the front line of the Covid pandemic – accounting for 30,000, thirty percent, of all deaths including [347 care workers](#). Too many care workers had to rely on Statutory Sick Pay or less. In short, **the sector is in crisis with 112,000 vacancies** and at least 1.5 million elderly and vulnerable people with unmet care needs. Staff shortages and high turnover affect the quality and continuity of care for service users.*

The Government says:

“We are incredibly proud of all our health and care staff, and recognise their extraordinary commitment - working day and night putting our care and safety at the centre of everything they do. Beyond pay, we are developing further activity to enable the public, businesses and services to show their appreciation for social care workers, just as they do for our valued NHS colleagues.”

The FSCC says:

The petition has chimed a chord with the public. The Government seem badly out of step with the public mood. They should accept - not seek to evade - responsibility, give a pay rise to care workers immediately and then set about agreeing fundamental and long-term reform of social care.

The job of a carer is highly skilled and requires huge levels of dedication and hard work. It's more than a minimum wage job, ideally much more than a REAL living wage job. Would anyone in the current Government be willing to do it for one day, never mind one week?

SUPPORT FSCC AND SHOW YOU CARE FOR CARERS: PLEASE SIGN THE PETITION. IT'S TIME FOR A FAIR DEAL!

For more information, please contact fsc@devoconnect.co.uk